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UNITY

"HE HATH MADE OF ONE ALL NATIONS OF MEN."

VOLUME LII. CHICAGO, DECEMBER 24, 1903. NUMBER 17

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people, to grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the most High; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people in the remission of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high shall visit us, to shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace."

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UNITY

VOLUME LII. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1903. NUMBER 17

The Cross is tall,
And I too small
To reach His hand
Or touch His feet;
But on the sand
His footprints I have found,
And it is sweet
To kiss the holy ground.

FATHER TABB.

As announced in our editorial columns last week, we meant to give ourselves and our readers a respite this week, believing that the double number, the extra labor and the increased cost of the output would justify the omission. But it transpires that "Uncle Sam" is vigilant for the integrities of the "second-class" mail matter. Going on the theory, perhaps too well justified, that editors and publishers may cheat their constituency if the opportunity is given, the postal department rules that no paper may omit an issue without forfeiting its second-class privileges, or at least without making a lot of trouble for itself and its publishers. And so, having fulfilled the spirit of the contract with our subscribers last week, we beg the privilege of proceeding to fulfil the letter this week, and hasten to atone for our ignorance, confessing that the only spontaneous thing about this issue is the Christmas good will that carries over and the rhythm of Mr. Mann's fortnightly message which is in consequence not broken. Last week we gave our readers a double number for love's sake; this we send them a half number for law's sake, and touch our cap to "Uncle Sam" in respectful obedience.

McCutcheon, the cartoonist, is a missionary with a pencil, an evangelist of humor. He is a preacher who writes his parables in black and white, and who oftentimes makes us laugh simply to keep us from crying. There is before us in the *Chicago Tribune* a pathetic cartoon entitled "A Christmas Sentiment," with the ever new-old angel song of "Peace on earth, good will to men" as its motto. It is a picture of the earth with Russian and Japanese confronting each other with cocked revolvers and swords drawn over Korea, United States senators contending with clenched fists over the Panama treaty, the United States and Colombia brandishing their swords over the luckless youth who sits astride the Isthmus, and Chicago strikers intercepting a hearse with its sad load of helpless earth on its way to the cemetery. And all this after nineteen hundred years of Christmas caroling, Christian pretension and loud commitments to the gospel of the meek and lowly Nazarene!

The Chicago papers are full of startling head-lines telling of "A Carnival of Crime," "An Epidemic of Violence," with its attendant notes of murder, arson and bribery. The situation is bad. Innocent men have been shot on their way home; others have been relieved of their valuables in broad day-light and in the supposed "safe sections" of the city. A special committee of twenty-one prominent citizens has been appointed to take action. The committee at present writing has held one session and has taken steps looking towards organization and effective measures. All this is well, very well. It is "high time something was done about it," but the committee and the public they represent will do well to remember that this situation, which has sprung from no sudden cause, cannot be changed suddenly by any "prompt" remedies. The whirlwind we are reaping is the harvest of the wind we have been sowing, persistently, recklessly, and sometimes with boastfulness and pride. The indifference on the part of "leading citizens" to the slow and silent forces that make for moral sanity, financial integrities and spiritual culture, the devotion to style rather than to ethical culture, the recklessness of speculation rather than the careful study of economy and prudence, the mothers who have not time to go with their children to the Sunday-school, the fathers who have no Sunday habits that carry them to the church they profess to believe in, the ministers who are too busy with their denominational work and too much absorbed in the difficult task of keeping up their theological fences to join hands in the interest of civic betterment—these as well as the saloons, the gambling dens, the brothels and the violent passions of inconsiderate and unenlightened laborers, are responsible for the present condition of things in Chicago. Whiskey *and* the *"Bal Poudre,"* gambling *and* the "horse show," the reckless speculation on the Board of Trade *and* the brutalities of labor unions, are causes that lead to these grim results. Everything that militates against the simple life, plain living and high thinking, makes for violence. We are sorry to hear from certain directions the recommendation that all the citizens should carry arms and prepare to defend themselves. Violence cannot be cured by violence. There has already been too much shooting. Safety comes not through the magazine guns. There is a connection between brigandage among the boys and brigandage among nations. Let the message of Christmas be taken seriously to heart. We must begin away back and away down before we can ameliorate present conditions. When the unimportant, the unnecessary, the un-useful and the inartistic demands upon our lives are ignored, then there will be money, time and strength enough to attend to the important, the necessary, the useful and the artistic things of life.

Causes of the Modern Transformation of Religious Thought.

III.

Eighteenth-Century Free-Thinking.

Given at Unity Church, Omaha, December 13, by Rev. Newton Mann.

In the eighteenth century for the first time since the classic period the mind of man began boldly to assert its rights, its freedom to think and to speak. For the two previous centuries the thought of the masters of science had been in abeyance, uttered with apology, published by stealth, read furtively in terror of the Inquisition. Copernicus had shrunk to his very last days from printing what he knew to be the most significant discovery ever made, and ventured then only through an intermediary more compromising than himself, who thought to take the curse off by presenting the new theory not as the real system of the universe, but as a mere hypothesis, an exercise in mental gymnastics! Even this subterfuge, in which the great man had no part, would not have saved him from a terrible fate had not Death been more kind than the Church and taken him away before the ink was dry on his book. A hundred years later Galileo had no liberty to tell the truth, and had his mouth contumeliously and ostentatiously closed for trying to do it. Servetus had gone to the stake in 1553, and Bruno in 1600, only because there was no other way of answering them; and all over Europe the midnight sky flamed with the light of burning heretics through those terrible centuries. But in spite of all, and furthered by the very monstrousness of these repressions, liberty of thought steadily gained a foothold, audacious thinkers arose faster than the authorities could burn them, the smoke of *auto da fés* fired with indignation the breasts of sympathetic survivors, and the protesting intellect of Europe set itself on the road of free-thinking.

Great encouragement to this movement was given by the successful schism effected in Germany, Great Britain, Sweden and Holland by the Reformation; for, though the Reformers took over most of the dogmas of the old church and even intensified some of them, they did in a measure nullify the despotism of the Roman hierarchy, make it safer for a man to breathe and say his soul was his own. Then science was just beginning its career of triumphs, compelling the respect of the world; after the wretched Galileo business the Church practically gave up the effort to suppress the new science by force; the genius of Descartes in France, of Newton in England, of Leibnitz in Germany, had given to liberated thinking a certain prestige which it was not slow in taking advantage of. With every step in the progress of science, with every new discovery on earth or in the heavens, the incongruity between the church teaching and the established facts of the universe became more glaring, and in the great awakening of the European intellect this incongruity could not be passed over. The best minds became openly skeptical as to the creeds. In the north, where Protestantism had been successful, incidentally creating a more liberal atmosphere, opposition to the church teaching was less radical, less bitter than in France, where the infamous policy of Louis XIV. had stifled the Reformation. In France the rising modern spirit was brought face to face with medieval theology in all its grotesqueness and intolerance. The scholar who did most to prepare the way for the free-thinkers was Pierre Bayle, famous author of a work which he called *The Historical and Critical Dictionary*, in which he gathered up out of all the past and the present such a mass of contradictory learning as was never got together before. If the authorities with which he deals in these sixteen volumes are taken as of equal value they simply cancel one another, and the reader is left with the conviction that nothing is to be known on any general subejct. "Never a book," says Lecky, "evinced more clearly the vanity of human opinions, or the disintegrating power of an exhaustive inquiry." Naturally, therefore, to the mind of Bayle there could be no greater folly, no clearer crime than compelling people to accept certain opinions, or punishing people for holding what you consider false opinions. He contends that every man has a right to his own opinion on any subject; that for fundamental questions every person has a basis of judgment in himself. The author begins his work with the contention that the mind instinctively recognizes certain principles as of unquestionable validity, against which no authority can for a moment stand; in which he took the same ground as was afterward taken by Kant. For example, he declared that a mathematical axiom, such as, "things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another," sets forth the highest degree of certainty, being intuitively apprehended as truth, and nothing contradicting it can be accepted though it call itself a revelation. For every proposition more complicated must justify itself by a process of reasoning, and "no process of reasoning can be so evident as the axiom." He carries the same doctrine of intuition into morals, and insists that "the fundamental differences between right and wrong are so stamped upon the mind that they may be taken as the ultimate tests of all ethical teaching." How modern ring the words written now more than two hundred years since: "All moral laws without exception must be submitted to this natural idea of equity which as well as the light of reason illumines every man that comes into the world. Any dogma whatever, whether advanced as a declaration of Scripture or otherwise proposed, is false if refuted by the clear and distinct notions of this natural light, and this is preëminently the case where moral ideas are involved." We should therefore unhesitatingly reject any moral teaching which contravenes the moral sense within us, no matter from what source that teaching comes. All this and much more in a similar vein comes out in a treatise of Bayle, the title of which he took from the gospel parable of the Slighted Feast: "Compel them to come in." His main point is that we have no business to compel anybody to come in; that force in the matter of religious profession is and has ever been an abomination, irrational and immoral. We are apt to think that some people about us are living in damnable error, but we should remember that they very likely have the same thought about us, and that these two facts put together cast doubt on both conclusions. Instead of trying to force people to our views with torch and thumb-screw, we should do well to listen patiently to what they have to say to us. Bayle's own words are: "Every man who has found that he is subject to error, who sees, or thinks he sees, as he gets older the falsity of many things that he once held to be true, ought always to be disposed to listen to whoever has anything to tell him in the matter even of religion." Continuing he says (and we must remember here that he wrote before Cook made his voyages of discovery, and so might assume that there were people of ideas living on some continent in the South Pacific): "I am persuaded that if we should see a fleet from the Austral land whose people had given us to understand that they wished to confer with us on the nature of God and on the worship which man owes to him, having learned that on these subjects we have fallen into some damnable errors, I am persuaded that it would not be a bad plan for us to listen to them, not only because it might be a means of disabusing them of errors in which we be-

lieve them to be, but also because we might very well profit by their instructions." These were remarkable words to be resounding through Europe at the very time Giordano Bruno was burning at the stake in Rome after seven years of imprisonment for not holding the precise philosophical opinions sanctioned by Holy Church! No wonder the intolerant soul of Louis XIV. took umbrage at Bayle, closed the Protestant college at Sedan where he was Professor, forcing him to retire into the Netherlands; but no royal edict could prevent his becoming, after Descartes and Montaigne, the father of a new age. His books, first published at Rotterdam, were the inexhaustible arsenal from which Voltaire and Rousseau drew their most effective weapons later on. Without the genius of either of these two more renowned men, simply a cold, critical student and reasoner, he yet laid the sure foundations of the modern rationalistic movement. Eighty years before, Vanini had gone to the stake even in France for free-thinking which was ethereal mildness in comparison.

Meanwhile the English people had made considerable advances in the direction of religious liberty. As the rupture from Rome in the 16th century had weakened the sanction of ecclesiastical authority, so the rise of the dissenting sects in the 17th century still further reduced the virulence of that authority, and while under Cromwell intolerance bore down with a heavy hand upon Catholicism and every imitation of Catholicism, great forward steps were being taken. It was then that Milton wrote in praise of liberty, and Taylor and Harrington chimed in, playing the lesser parts. The seed they sowed ripened to a rich harvest in succeeding generations, and when in the 18th century Voltaire, fleeing from the consequences of exercising too much freedom of speech in Paris, took refuge for some years in London, he was amazed at the measure of liberty enjoyed by Englishmen; and on his return to France never wearied of pointing out the contrast in this respect between the two countries. It was on what he saw in England that he formed his ideal of a government which should rule without infringing on the sacred rights of the individual.

England came to her liberties by the processes of a gradual evolution, and eighteenth-century free-thinking, while it had its stalwart representatives there, went to no such extremes and produced no such shock as in France. The more volatile French people awoke with a sudden start from their long lethargy to find themselves soul and body in chains, and ere the century ended took violent reprisals on their oppressors. The struggle from beginning to end is of the most significant and momentous in human history, and with its moving causes we have chiefly now to deal. The two conspicuous figures are Voltaire and Rousseau; what have these two men had to do in bringing about the modern transformation of religious ideas?

To begin with, the wonder is that men of such irregular life should have had any influence at all upon religion. Rousseau especially was one of the most extraordinarily perverse spirits that ever attained to a great fame. Unfortunate in losing his mother at his birth, and yet more unfortunate in the character of his father, at ten years of age he was thrown upon the world, and shortly commenced a life of roaming vagabondage, adventures and intrigues, of which we know nothing save as from his own report in the famous *Confessions,* the worst escapades of which are charitably believed to be inventions of the writer for the embellishment of his book. Through his whole life of 66 years he quarreled with nearly everybody he had anything to do with. Of his own interests he was reckless to a degree that suggests insanity, turning from one employment to another, passing from city to city, abjuring the Protestantism in which he was born, and then abjuring his abjuration, winning admirers of his evident genius notwithstanding his unsurpassable perversity, living, as was the custom of penniless prodigies in those days, by the favor of wealthy women who became infatuated with him, writing some trifles, but really doing nothing very notable till he was 37 years old. He then achieved distinction by an essay of which the contention was the monstrous error that the savage state is superior to the civilized. Not all his theories were as false as this, but, true or false, such was the literary gift he disclosed; his work was henceforth sure of an enthusiastic reception. He poured out volume after volume marvelously rich in exquisite human sentiment and description of natural beauty, proving himself the first great artist in words among moderns. He wrote novels, operas, dramas, songs, and an ambitious work on the philosophy of government called *The Social Contract,* which had great vogue, weaving into every serious work his revolutionary conceptions of politics and religion; for this strange mortal was essentially a democrat, at least there was no place in his system for kings, and he was, in his manner, a devotee. In religion a sentimental deist, he had no use for the hierarchy, teaching in lieu of the Roman ritual a fascinating worship of nature in the practice of fraternity and the exercise of the human affections. His own practice was frightfully out of joint with his preaching, breaking any fraternal relation on the slightest provocation or without provocation, shirking the most intimate responsibilities, throwing his own children, all five of them, into foundling hospitals, falling out with everybody that tried to do him a kindness. But other preachers of that day were no better in their morals, and in no position to throw stones at him for these offenses; they could only attack him for his theories, and this they proceeded to do. The parlement of Paris was induced to condemn one of his books, the archbishop issued a pastoral against him, and to escape punishment he was obliged to flee. He took refuge in Switzerland where he was born, but his doctrines were not relished by the authorities there, and his own city of Geneva denounced him. The Bernese government ordered him out of its territory. The poor man knew not which way to turn. But while governments and priests persecuted him, while on account of personal idiosyncracies he was not lovable as a man, the engaging quality of his thought, the new and wondrous charm of his style, won the hearts of the people everywhere to the productions of his pen. From one end of Europe to the other, everybody who could read read Rousseau. And here was the extraordinary spectacle of a most popular author driven from country to country, and at his wit's end to find a place to lay his head in peace. In this extremity it was David Hume, name that stood for what was best in English thought and life, who came to the rescue. Himself an apostle of free-thought, though of a more solid order, he reached a hand to this eccentric brother, pursued, tormented by church and state, and offered him a home in England, where he could enjoy his needed liberty, secure from all alarms. The poor exile accepted, and was housed in London in January, 1766. He remained in England sixteen months, generously provided for by his benefactor, the king and his ministers, with all of whom he quarreled. Never was there a great man at once so suspicious of his friends, so obstinate to his opponents—a hard man to please, being, as has been said, "equally indignant at neglect and intolerant of attention." He was at bitter enmity with Voltaire and the other leaders of the French philosophic school, and was angry with Hume for not agreeing with him that they were all rascals. Shamefully misused by Horace Walpole, his abnormally distrustful nature led him to

suspect all Englishmen of foul designs, and he fled to France in 1767. Three years later, official action against him having lapsed, he returned to Paris, where he remained till his death in 1778, having lived to see the outbreak of the American Revolution, prominent leaders of which he had deeply imbued with his thought.

Of the more sentimental part of the French nation he became the prophet and the idol, and his influence more than that of any other may be said to have determined the French Revolution with what it brought of good and of evil. Largely through him the master spirits of that country, the persons of weight and influence, in the last decade of the century, found themselves at outs with the old order alike in church and state. A nation, nominally Catholic, had become, as far as the intelligent, enterprising class was concerned, predominantly free-thinking, deistic, of the school either of Rousseau or Voltaire. Of the two, Rousseau had the more influence on minds religiously inclined, for he was less destructive, never scoffed, and actually essayed to teach a positive religion, which he derived from nature and decked out with much fine sentiment. He even influenced many priests, for he was considerate of the church, and in fact upheld some of her worst practices—approved of persecution on principle. He justified the harshest measures the church had ever taken with heretics, and insisted that when the heretics came into power they should adopt similar tactics, and either kill or banish all who should teach the doctrine of an exclusive salvation. This fine sentimentalist taught his followers the fiercest intolerance *toward those who, if in power, would practice intolerance.* The fruit of this teaching was seen after a few years in the Reign of Terror. But much of what this strange genius taught eventuated in good, and all wrought together tremendously for the transformation of the world in the days when new politics and a new religion were in the air, and the daily conduct of a propagandist entered little into the public estimate of the propaganda.

Contemporary with Rousseau there were, besides Voltaire, quite a number of vigorous philosophical writers whose free-thinking was more or less pronounced, and who left their mark on the tendencies of that seething time: Diderot, the greatest of them all, founder and chief author of the famed *Encyclopaedia,* d'Alembert, the baron d'Holbach, Helvétius, Condillac, Condorcet, and others. But the preëminence of Voltaire in almost every respect was such that he may be taken as representative of the whole movement. In this prodigious genius we have the most remarkable personality of the century. In every respect save a common love of liberty and a certain disregard of conventional morals, he was in strong contrast with Rousseau. To begin with, his sanity was never called in question. Then he had nothing of the vagabond about him, never lost sight of his personal interests; and while he lived a good deal on his friends, he was under no necessity of doing so. His reputation to be sure was far from spotless in more than one particular; the strict moralist will find enough to criticize in him; but it is to be remembered, he never once posed as the apostle of any religion, natural or other, but contented himself with exposing the absurdities, the incongruities, the childish nonsense of much that was taught as Christian doctrine, and denouncing with a power of invective that has never been equaled the abomination of spiritual despotism, the unspeakable horrors of persecution still in his day notoriously in evidence. A hard student all his long life, his system of thought was not dreamed out but worked out. Poet, historian and philosopher, he was also for his time a good deal of a scientist, even making some mentionable physical discoveries. He did not insinuate his ideas under the cloak of bewitching romances full of tender sentiment, but launched them openly with a directness, a precision and power of statement never matched in human speech. His wide scholarship, keen perception and sound judgment, his light and easy touch, as of a giant toying with the affairs of common men, his withering sarcasm, his ridicule, potent beyond all argument, made him, especially in the later years of his life, the most formidable antagonist ever seen of medievalism in church and state. Under his sturdy and unremitting blows the old systems of thought were thoroughly shattered for the more thoughtful people the world over, his books going into all tongues, carrying even in translations enough of the author's unrivaled style to secure a host of readers. The doctrine of an exclusive salvation, of a heaven with closed doors, with the keys in the pockets of priests who admit only the souls of the baptized after a sufficent number of masses have been paid for, revolted the sage of Ferney, and all measures of coercion were to him abominations. To his stalwart and unceasing efforts from the date of the official torture and murder of Jean Calas, is chiefly due the greatest humanitarian triumph in the world's history, the abolition in civilized states of persecution for opinion's sake. Far more enlightened than Rousseau, he did not counsel his party, when the hour of their ascendancy should come, to resort to the same harsh measures of repression that had been used on them; and so, while he contributed immensely to the movement which culminated in the French Revolution, nothing can be found in his teaching to justify the horrors with which that Revolution was stained.

As far as religious beliefs are concerned, Voltaire and his associates did a much needed work of destruction, so irrational in essential particulars had those beliefs become. There was nothing possible but demolition, because here was a church which, professing infallibility, could for that reason condescend to no readjustments. So it came about that the intellect of France was in great part alienated from the church, and remains so to this day. The destroyers of the old convictions unfortunately were not the men to supply any new ones to command respect and constitute the basis of a reverent faith. A first serious disqualification for any such work lay in the fact that almost every one of them bore a more or less unsavory reputation. Few of them showed that they had positive religious convictions; hardly any possessed distinctively religious qualities. The result was that eighteenth-century free-thinking as represented in France where it made the most stir, was little more than a system of negations, leaders and followers abruptly breaking away from the old, with no thought of substituting anything in its place. Consequently, while a great liberty was achieved, there was no complete development of religious ideas. Voltarianism did away with some of the most monstrous evils that ever afflicted humanity, but it created nothing; it was and is a system of negations.

In Germany and other Protestant countries the liberating movement of the eighteenth century took on a more moderate tone, and, encountering a more elastic opposition, some readjustment of religious ideas became possible, saving any such violent rupture as occurred in France. Great minds accepted the new thought without breaking with the church—Lessing, Goethe, Schiller in Germany; Berkeley, Butler, Johnson, Hume, Locke, and others in Great Britain; through whom Protestant Christianity adapted itself to the growing knowledge of the time, and a real evolution of religious ideas went on. If the 16th century Reformation had done nothing more, it is to be thanked for creating an atmosphere in which toleration is at least possible, and possible some broadening of the old creed. Under Catholicism such things are

theoretically out of the question. The infallible church is not susceptible of any amendment or amelioration. That church could not admit having learned anything by all that the world found out in the eighteenth century. Even in the second quarter of the nineteenth century Pope Gregory XVI. uttered these astounding words *ex cathedra,* and therefore infallibly:

> We arrive now (he says, taking up a fresh topic) at another most fruitful cause of evils, with which we lament that the Church is at present afflicted; namely, indifferentism, or that pernicious opinion which is disseminated everywhere by the artifice of wicked men, according to which eternal salvation may be obtained by the profession of any faith, if only practice be directed by the rule of right and uprightness. * * * From this noxious fountain of indifferentism flows that absurd and erroneous opinion, or rather that form of madness, which declares that liberty of conscience should be asserted and maintained by everyone. For which most pestilential error, that full and immoderate liberty of opinion paves the way which, to the injury of sacred and civil government, is now spread far and wide, and which some with the utmost impudence have extolled as beneficial to religion. But "what," said Augustine, "is more deadly to the soul than the liberty of error?" * * * From this cause, too, arises that never sufficiently to be execrated and to be detested liberty of publication of all books relished by the populace, which some persons are most ardently extending and promoting. * * * And yet, alas! there are those who are so carried away by impudence that they audaciously assert that the deluge of errors flowing from this source is amply counterbalanced by an occasional book which, amidst the transport of iniquity, defends religion and truth. * * * What sane man would permit poison to be publicly scattered about, sold, and even drunk, because there is a remedy by which its effects may possibly be counteracted?—(Bull of the Feast of the Assumption, 1832; quoted by Lecky.)

It is obvious that where the rising free thought had to confront such unreasoning intolerance as this, enthroned in church and state, the result, political and religious alike, could hardly be more than an abortion. After the discoveries of science had revealed new heavens and a new earth, and fearless spirits had pointed out the shocking incongruities of the old creed with the new knowledge, in Catholic countries the teaching of the church went right on as though nothing had happened. But in Protestant lands no one voice was empowered to speak for the Church; and, while the findings of science were never exactly welcome, the brightest minds in the church were generally disposed to adapt their thinking to the new conditions, with the result that gradually the better views percolated through the whole body. Protestantism has always had its liberal wing, and this, by entering into affiliation with the liberating forces in science and philosophy, has steadily effected that readjustment of religious thought to the growing world-knowledge which is its natural mode of evolution—a process which, though the church is not always conscious of the fact, is its glory and its crown.

The main result of eighteenth-century free-thinking, as far as it bore on religion, was to make the old creeds intellectually disreputable. The vehement literature of the movement went everywhere, and bright minds, from Catharine of Russia to the thoughtful cobbler in London, were carried away with it. Revulsion from spiritual bondage carried many far out of any church connection, forming an anti-religious element which under one name and another still persists, though coming now to have generally a belated, Rip-van-Winkle appearance. Others accepted the truth so forcibly set forth, dropped out of their minds the discredited doctrines with gratitude for the deliverance, and found themselves religiously better off than before. The dogmas proved as little essential to religion as phlogiston had been to chemistry. The spirit of honest, earnest inquiry established itself in the churches, in the face of much opposition to be sure, with a high consciousness that to it was committed the very salvation of instituted religion in the modern world. The men and women of that spirit are the dearest names of the last century; they worthily fulfilled their mission. They have demonstrated that it is possible to be as free as the freest free-thinker, and at the same time not be lacking in any of the fundamentals of religion; that in fact freedom is the very air that pure religion needs to breathe. True, this is a discovery first made to the modern world by men who were not particularly religious; we can be grateful to them for making it without in all things following their example.

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Her Christmas Prayer.

Mary Mother, be good to him;
Be kind to him this day.
It is the only Christmas time
That he has been away.

I promised him a world of toys
If he would only stay.
Sure, heaven's full of little boys—
Of little boys that play,
But you will know the smile of him
Among a thousand more;
His smile will make all else seem dim
When you call him "Asthore!"

Sure, you will know him by his eyes
That are so sweet and blue
And deep and clear and very wise—
They read the heart of you.
His hair is golden as the sun;
His curls, they are so quaint
They mind you of the halo on
An angel or a saint.

I promised him a splendid tree
With candles all aglow,—
O, Mary Mother, you can see
'Twas me that loved him so!
O, Mary Mother, you will see
My boy, so sweet and slim—
His eyes are hungering for me
As my eyes are for him.

Mary Mother, be good to him;
Be kind to him this day.
It is the only Christmas time
That he has been away.

—*W. D. Nesbit.*

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